

The Shape

FATHER MIKE

Betty and I loved our years in Amaden Valley ministering with the good people of ECA. We were immensely privileged to follow the fine leadership of John Buenz, the founding Vicar. We arrived in 1973 and our boys, Chris and Ken, were then just four and two years old! Now we have three grandchildren and another on the way. Time flies.

The congregation was such a fine fellowship. In those days many people came to the area to work in the relatively new, exciting and flourishing electronics industry of Silicon Valley. One of the reasons ECA was such a vital fellowship was that the church was a primary contact for meeting people and creating community. The Joint Venture worked well, and it was a wonderful honor and privilege to have the Rev. Jack Takayanagi, the UCC Minister, as a partner in ministry and good friend. Dot Allfrey did the secretarial work for both congregations with dedication and savvy, and much of the youth ministry, social outreach and fellowship activities were shared. I have had an enduring affection for the United Church of Christ ever since.

For many years we had “Tuesday School” rather than Sunday School. It was nice to have education time with the children that did not take them away from worship. On Sundays we were all together, young and ‘older.’

I’ll never forget some of the river rafting trips with youth, going up in the hills to help hold off brush fires, the “God Squad”, the outdoor worship area for joint Services, Easter Sunrise with Rev. Jack, beginning the Almaden Valley Youth Counseling Service, Andy and all the talented musicians, the tiered worship space that allowed us to see each other’s expressions and to be in God’s Presence without just looking at the back of someone’s head, being welcomed as a parish at Diocesan Convention, the establishment of the Diocese of El Camino Real, serving on the first Episcopal Search Committee, and so much more.

A further joy through the years has been staying in occasional contact with many dear parishioners from the 70’s days.

I offer my profound congratulations on the occasion of ECA’s 40th Anniversary!

Yours in Christ,

+Mike (and Betty) Creighton

From the Editor



I'm all out of faith based thoughts to write about, so instead I am going to talk about a topic that will really cause some dissention and ruffle feathers. Well, maybe not. My review of the Saab 9-5 station wagon in June has caused some interesting responses, not just from casual people, but from real live people at General Motors. I have to say I found quite pleasing, almost a mark of achievement in a way. Here's the bottom line, the 9-5 is a terrible car, apologies to anyone who owns one, but... they really are. The reason all comes down to taking a look at the big picture. The auto market is just like any other market the world over. You can boil your Raison d'être down to three categories: price, value and quality. In the real world styling really only gets you so far, so we can honestly eliminate that, or roll it into value.

Price is really quite an easy category to define. Take the Kia Rio, at \$11,000 you really can't expect much from a car anymore, and in truth it does not disappoint, but it is what it is: a bargain.

Similarly, quality is quite simple to quantify. Take a Lexus for example, the quality is high and it can compete on this alone in the market. Why is the price high? Because it's good.

Value is unfortunately where everything else in the world ends up, and this is a tricky area. If like the Saab 9-5 you aren't cheap and you aren't high quality, there's a problem because that inherently implies bad value. The better your quality for the price, the better your value. This is something that Toyota and Honda have learned to master. As it would happen, the market has also arrived at this conclusion with Saab managing to eek on only 2 car sales per dealer on average in June of this year.

Alex Dykes

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7:30 AM and 11:00 AM

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MINISTRIES

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| ACOLYTES | Valerie Tysanner |
| ALTAR GUILD | Elaine LaVallee, Betty Wood |
| COFFEE HOUR | Pete Mayo |
| FOLK CHOIR | Andy Kerr |
| GREETERS | Sharon Mills |
| GOD SQUAD | Stephen Mills |
| GOOD SAMs | Kelli Casale / Brenda McHenry |
| HANDBELL CHOIR | Maryke Williams |
| KIDS' BREAKOUT | Leslie Rousseau |
| LAY READERS | Jenny Hoyt |
| MONTGOMERY MEALS | Amy Griffith |
| NURSERY | Pauline Gilligan |
| PRAYER VINE | Dorothy Willard |
| USHERS | Dave Byers |
| SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP | Katie McCormick |
| STEWARDSHIP | George Romer |
| JR HIGH YOUTH GROUP | Katie McCormick |
| WORSHIP | Sandie Mueller |
| WEBMASTER | Kim Petruzzelli |
| YOUTH SUNDAY | Jim McPherson, Bryan Bond |

ECA STAFF

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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| MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORGANIST | John Leslie |
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| YOUTH DIRECTOR | Katie McCormick |
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THE SHAPE IS USUALLY A MONTHLY PUBLICATION
OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

ECA's Senior Warden

Honk if you are part of the ECA Family!

You may be familiar with this story, but I think it bears repeating as we begin another “school year” in the life of our church. As geese fly in their “V” formation they “honk.” You may see and hear them overhead during these fall days. They do this to encourage and support their leader, assuring him they are working right with him to reach the goal. When the leader gets tired and needs a break he merely falls back into a supportive position in the formation and another flies readily into the lead spot. The journey is long but as each takes a turn being support or leader, the goal is reached year after year. The more geese in the formation to share the task at hand the easier it is to reach the goal.

ECA has some very exciting goals and visions for this fall with our 40th birthday on the horizon. As we explore new ways to grow and enrich our church we may feel overwhelmed. As we face the challenges of developing more meaningful worship experiences for our families we may think the task is too hard. As we search for opportunities to reach out boldly in the name of Christ serving those less fortunate, we may think the job is too big. Yes, our goals and visions may seem overwhelming, too big a job; or challenging, too hard a job; or impossible, too big a dream. The truth is we can reach our goals and visions even those yet to be dreamed, just like the geese, if everyone is willing to find some small way to offer support to those who willingly take a turn to lead.

Let's consider the Sunday School program as one example. You may not feel called or equipped to teach. Maybe it is just too big of a commitment for you at this time. *No problem.* How about volun-

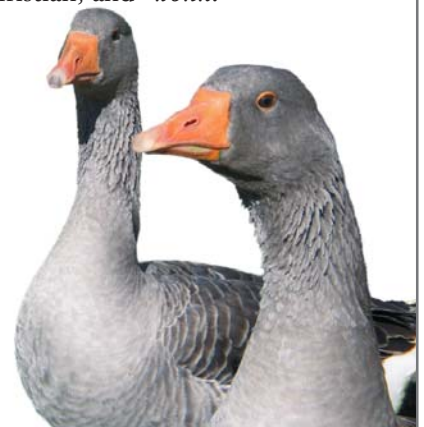
teering one Sunday a month to help a teacher? Be that extra pair of hands to pour juice, clean up a spill, help children with craft activities, or help with crowd control. It's a great way to support and encourage someone who has said “yes” to teaching. And it is never too late to volunteer.

Perhaps you like to attend church activities or fellowship events. Your schedule is hectic as it is and working on the preparation is just out of the question. *No problem.* Consider helping on clean-up. What a boost and encouragement to those who have put the event together and who by then may be on their last dregs of energy. This fall we have several church wide events that can use lots of extra pairs of hands to get the job accomplished.

Or maybe your energies to serve are more inclined to advisory roles. If so, our vestry might be just the place for you. Each year we need four new members to join us. Perhaps, you would consider helping ECA in this way.

Let's all consider anew this fall what's available to each of us and step up, volunteer, give a little, support a fellow Christian, and “*honk!*”

*Susie Ferguson
Senior Warden*



ECA Lives

From Stephen

August was quite a month. We bid a tearful farewell to Lorry Long. Lorry died after a long and courageous struggle with cancer. When the time came, she was ready. She was a person of deep faith who had an encounter with God early in her struggle which left her courageous and almost fearless. We had communion, and we prayed. She told Jennifer what she wanted done with her special dolls and she said goodnight to Jerry. Then she went to be with the Lord stopping briefly to let Jerry know she was going to be alright. She loved this place and especially the nursery. Her legacy lives on in the nursery. We had a grand and glorious send off for her. The church was packed. We had over 260 people here! The ladies of the church outdid themselves for the reception. I don't think that Fellowship Hall has ever looked lovelier. Having some of Lorry's dolls and miniatures here was a wonderful touch. I loved the warmth with which you welcomed those outside the church in and made them feel welcome. I loved the warmth and the love you bespoke in talking about Lorry's life. I don't think anyone could have had a warmer or grander send-off. Thank you and bless you. You were wonderful in ministry.

We also had quite a movie night and campout in the tree lot. We did not plan it as a youth event but we had over 30 high school youth here at one time or another during the night. A good many of them spent the night and came to the 7:30 service in the morning. I don't know who was more surprised to see whom. The regulars were surprised because they don't usually see much of our youth. The youth

were surprised that anyone would actually get up before 7:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning. It was a wonderful event and one which is worth repeating. Thank you one and all for all you did.

Our high school youth are away this week on their raft and hiking trip to Rockin' Waters. This is a chance to say goodbye to last year's seniors who are off to college and to welcome last year's eighth graders to the fold. We have an exciting year planned and are looking forward to new growth and vitality.

We are also looking forward to the start of Sunday School on September 16th. We are going to try a new curriculum for the 3rd and 4th grade class, called *Living the Good News*. The Christian Education and Youth Committee selected it because it is liturgically based, theologically sound and hopefully as teacher friendly as the current curriculum from Group.

We are also working diligently to put together several Adult Education offerings which I am very excited about.

We will return to our Fall service schedule of 7:30 am and 11:00 am on September 9th.

Also please get ready for our gala 40th Anniversary Celebration coming in November.

*Salaam,
Stephen +*

First Annual ECA Campout

Perhaps you are surprised to read that this was our “first annual,” but a number of the campers requested we do it again...and maybe more than once a year. Imagine that! Yes, our first attempt at camping right here under our own trees was met with rave reviews and ideas for developing the event in the future. If you missed any part of it this time, you may want to consider joining us next time.

We started with a BBQ that was open to all. It brought back memories for us “longtime members” of days before the BBQ pit at church. We would gather in someone’s back yard over a Webber or two, cooking our own meat for dinner. Conversation over the grill was always interesting, learning new techniques to cook salmon, burn hotdogs, or marinate Persian chicken. Truth is I just hung out at the BBQ for the conversation, as there were ample side dishes from the potluck to make an entire meal without BBQ-ing a thing! We ended our dinner with roasting marshmallows over the coals and making decadent S’mores.

Those who chose to hang around after the BBQ gathered in the gravel for our movie selection for the evening. What a giant screen Bryan Bond created for us! It was fabulous. Some passers by on Camden thought it looked like a real drive-in movie. And that it was literally for Debbie Bishop, who viewed our movie wrapped up in the back of her SUV. The rest of us weathered the chilly night air in our beach chairs.

After the movie a few more drifted home and left us with the hard-core campers, numbering about

25, in 5 tents, one SUV, and two dorm rooms in the church. Of course, it is always questionable how much sleep anyone gets under these circumstances, but all were up and in the pews for the 7:30 AM service! After which we all enjoyed breakfast with the “early service regulars.” I bet I know 25 who took naps later that day!

Special thanks go to Bryan and Inge Bond for their hard work organizing this event. They did a fantastic job and were integral in making it a success.

Susie Ferguson



Stewardship

As a reminder, our Time, Talent, Treasure, & Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner will be on November 17, Saturday @ 6:00 pm. On that date we will share a Special Guest Dish Potluck Dinner (“What would I bring if I knew Jesus was coming?”) and share our thanksgivings during the Offertory leading to Holy Communion in the sanctuary.

Since it is your Treasure which the Vestry is collecting and disbursing in the name of Christ’s work in

As of 8/13/07 the Comerica accounts are as follows

\$148,570.25
 \$123,917.07
 \$272,487.32 Total

So, as we approach the harvest season, let us be mindful of the proper mindset for our ‘thanksgiving together on 11/17/07:

“Count your blessings instead of your crosses; Count your gains instead of your losses.

Count your joys instead of your woes; Count your friends instead of your foes.

Count your smiles instead of your tears; Count your courage instead of your fears.

Count your full years instead of your lean; Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.

Count your health instead of your wealth; Count on God instead of yourself. “

Author Unknown

Stay tuned; live the Gospel!

*George Romer,
 Vestry Stewardship Chair*



| | # of Pledges | \$ Pledged | Total \$ Gifts | \$ Difference |
|-----------|--------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| Overpaid | 20 | \$45,735 | \$69,446 | \$23,711 |
| Paid | 20 | \$23,225 | \$23,225 | \$0 |
| Underpaid | 37 | \$43,670 | \$24,571 | -\$19,099 |
| Total | 77 | \$112,630 | \$117,242 | \$4,612 |

our little place in the world, following is the status of pledged giving as of August 14

We are slightly ahead of projection. Thank you for your contributions in a steady and timely manner. For those who are behind, please prayerfully strive to ‘catch-up’ since our bill rate marches forward and can easily use up our slight ‘ahead’ cash flow.

Next, we have an ECA Endowment Fund, which is largely due to the generosity of the Shadinger Family gift. It has been built back from a low point in October, 2005 of \$233,663.01. We encourage those considering charitable gifts to benefit the work of ECA in a self-sustaining and legacy-producing way, donate to the ECA Endowment Fund.

Bible Study

Whether you an experienced bible student, or a beginner who's never done it before, you are invited to study the bible with an informal, lay-led group beginning September 13th. The only requirement is a willingness to engage in reflection on the Bible's meaning for us today. Everyone is welcome. Come when you can. This year, we are delving into the Gospel of John. John's gospel is unlike the other three. It has been said that instead of an historical gospel, John wrote a "spiritual" gospel. I'm not sure what that means yet, but come and we'll both find out.

Discussions are usually centered around questions given out the previous week, with an emphasis on how the readings apply to our daily lives. The schedule as well as weekly questions may be obtained on ECA's website. (Go to www.eca-sj.org. Click on Special Events and click on Bible Study Handouts.)

Please join Martha Lou and I on Thursday mornings from 10-11:30 in the choir room beginning September 13. Come and study the convincing testimony John lays out that Jesus truly was the Son of God.

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31)

Mary McPherson

Habitat for Humanity

Thanks to your good efforts in saving and delivering to church your empty aluminum cans, we were able to send Habitat for Humanity checks totaling \$172.00. The next can collection weekend will be September 8 and 9. Your cans can be left by the shed near the Rose Garden at that time. Thank you.

Tom the Can Man

Ladies Lunch

**Thursday, September 20th
Cantor Museum at Stanford**

We will be leaving ECA at 11 am for lunch and a museum tour. There is a sign up in the Fellowship Hall and everyone is welcome, in fact, please invite your friends! For more information, contact Amy Griffith at (408) 268-0920 or amy-g@pacbell.net

Amy Griffith

Vacation Bible Study 2007

Once again this year it was my privilege to volunteer at our JV VBS. First of all, my hat is off to Katie McCormick for her hard work and creative imagination. I am not sure how many hours she put into the effort, but it had to be a significant number. I was responsible for one station, she had to make the whole thing run smoothly and she was awesome.

Last year I was in charge of crafts. I am probably the world's least crafty person, so when I told Katie I would work this year my one proviso was that it be anything but crafts. And so I found myself in charge of drama. Four of the five days I helped present a dramatic version of a particular Bible Story, from the walls of Jericho falling down to Jesus rising from the dead. I thank Susan Gaydon for taking over on the day I had to miss.

I cannot tell you what a pleasure it was to see at least 30 children eagerly (mostly) learning more about the Bible and God's love for them. I was even more moved by the SHYGS and JHYGS youth who were the crew leaders and their assistants. Their care and concern for the children and their spiritual growth was very evident.

I won't try to name them all here. You know who you are and I hope you know how much I enjoyed working with you and watching you work with the children. I have to say a special thanks to Kele Lavery who assisted at the drama station every day. It was not her first choice, but she never complained to me, and she did everything asked of her and then some. Note for next year - it is much easier to release helium balloons from their covering than to corral them back in again.

Most of all I have to say how very proud I am of our two congregations who provided this leadership from adult and youth volunteers alike. My sister is a member of a large Roman Catholic Church in Bellevue, WA. They had to cancel their VBS this year because they could not get enough volunteers. I am not saying this to put that church down. I attend it when I am visiting there, and it is an active Christian community. I am simply saying how great it is that from our two relatively small congregations we were able to muster such impressive volunteers.

Mary Leal

HELP! HELP! Sunday School Needs YOU!

We're in need of Sunday School Teachers. Please let me know if you are willing to help out in this ministry. September 9th at 1PM we will have a meeting to hand out the leader books and go over the curriculum.

Katie McCormick

The Bond Report

As of December 2006, all of the JV building fund bonds have matured which means that all bond holders can “cash out” their bonds. According to our records, all of the outstanding bonds have been collected. The really interesting thing is that there is still \$25,000 remaining. This is a plea for any and all remaining bondholders that may be still out there to come forward and collect their due. The JV Board has decided to soon put any left over money into CDs as a short term action. Please doublecheck your records and let us know ASAP if you’re a “mystery bondholder”.

The Vestry



September Birthdays

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Brenda McHenry | 2 |
| Louis Stephan | 3 |
| Margot Estrade | 4 |
| Ted Fahlen | 5 |
| Katie McCormick | 5 |
| Kelli Casale | 8 |
| Dorothy Willard | 9 |
| Debbie Bishop | 14 |
| Marc Bond | 16 |
| Trish Reilly | 16 |
| Elizabeth Stevens | 16 |
| Maryke Williams | 17 |
| Pat McGarvin | 19 |
| Jerry Long | 20 |
| Gary Cassetta | 24 |
| Kathy Mastre | 24 |
| Lorry Long | 26 |
| John Leslie | 27 |
| Joe Machado | 28 |
| Nancy Romer | 29 |
| Jean Cassetta | 30 |

September Anniversaries

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Terry & Cindy Francis | 1 |
| Todd & Ellen Lukanc | 1 |
| Matt & Kelli Gundersen | 3 |
| John & Mary McPherson | 3 |
| Allan & Virginia Jones | 4 |
| Graham & Lynne Kelly | 20 |
| Jerry & Susie Ferguson | 21 |

Youth

Senior High Rock 'N Water Rafting Trip

Our group of 17 headed out from the church parking lot at around 5PM Wednesday August 15th. Coloma was our destination and it took everyone about 3 1/2 hours to arrive at ROCKnWATER. Eden, the staff guide, met us in the parking lot and she learned our names in a few minutes. A couple of our names had changed for the duration in that process. Eden aka Dainty took us on a tour of the camp, gave us some rules to follow and lit the campfire. We were encouraged to sleep under the stars and most of us did. I was feeling kind of whimpy having set up my condo-tent when a skunk crossed my path as I came back from the experience chambers (out houses) and at that moment I felt very happy about sleeping in my tent!

Cowboy potatoes were the fare for breakfast after which a gallon of water was required. Oh and Cliff saved us coffee drinkers with his coffee press as no coffee was served at camp. Anyway, we loaded up in our cars with Eden and our camp director, Eric, for the canyon exploration. It was a 45 minute drive to the canyon and about a 30-minute hike in and down to the river. The hike was not too bad; however, there was a section of the trail that was probably at a 40-degree slope. Most of us slid on our backsides for some of this section of the trail.

When we arrived at the river, we welcomed a cold dip. What we didn't know at the time was that we would be spending approximately 50 percent of our time in the river. It was a challenging day of swimming, trying to walk in shallow water over very slippery rocks and climbing along the riverbanks. This became exhausting for some and at least tiring for everyone. The youthful energy is AMAZING!

There was plenty of playtime in beautiful pools. We encountered wonderful rocks to jump off of, scream producing water snakes, bugs, and a few fish on our trek. The canyon was all our own. Of course we had our bruises, scrapes, blisters and sunburns to show for our efforts.

We made it back to camp just in time for dinner. I can't remember what we ate but I know I was ravenous and grateful that someone else had prepared the meal. Eden lit a campfire and showed some of the kids how to braid bracelets while others played cards. Eden is a youth minister in San Diego and she led a discussion starting with what was our thorn and rose for the day. The roses outweighed the thorns. She then led us in an odd game of rhythmic Samurai sword slashing. Cliff excelled at this game. I'm not sure what that means but I was proud of him. She talked to us about her faith journey and challenged us to think about our own journey. We ended the campfire with a promise of steamed rolls in the morning.

The next morning we were up around 7AM with Eden laying down on the kids and rolling over them to wake them up. Her version of "steamed rolls." We were so tired the night before several of us fell for the ruse and we were somewhat disappointed. Of course this was another advantage of being in a tent. Oh Well, no steamed rolls for Gloria, Jess, Serena or Katie.

After breakfast we were on the bus heading to the class 3 rapids on the American River. Many of our group had not been rafting before so straight off the guides were instructing us about how to paddle. Their goal was to develop our skill so we looked

Youth

Senior High Rock 'N Water Rafting Trip

like Olympic rowers. Well, the guys probably came the closest, as many of them have rafted several times before. As far as our other two rafts, let's see, if you could imagine a drunken spider - well, there you have it.

This portion of the river ran water at a much lower temperature than the North Fork of the previous day. It was made quite clear at the first rapid which we "surfed." The waves poured over the upstream rafters, myself included. After nearly freezing and yelling 'that's enough', we made our way through numerous rapids of great fun. We had three rafts named as follows. The six chicks (later renamed the 5 chicks, 1 hen, and a rooster), the Princess Pirates (the guys) boat plus Eden, and the leader boat with Eric as our guide. In between the rapids it was all out war! Water guns came out, paddle splashing was perfected sort of, and dragging or rather sneak attack grabbing people out of boats was the order of the day. I fell victim to this courtesy of Ryan McPherson, Faith, you gave a good fight too! Oars were stolen only to be retrieved by singing silly songs. Kids were balancing on the front of the rafts while the others paddled in circles. The ugly song was sung as a taunt and the drumming river version of a Queen tune were the battle cries. These were just some of our antics.

About a third of us experienced being thrown out of the rafts during a run. The most infamous was Gloria Ashdown-Skowronski's disappearance into the rushing water caught on film. Here's a play by play: First the lean, then the tilt, the grabbing of the hair, only one arm and one leg visible, then nothing but white water and Serena's look of horror, a paddle handle, the occupants of the raft now

turn their attention to the second part of the rapid, Oh! It's Gloria's head bobbing up and then thankfully the rescue! Check out the pictures on the website. I must say that I was impressed by Gloria's tenacity and ultimate good spirits throughout the entire excursion. (Which was only 2 days but at times felt like 10!)

Toward the end of the 12-mile float as the energy and splashing waned, we in the leader raft paused to take note of the bible verses written on the paddles of the oars. It was a comforting reminder that even in the most challenging experience the Lord is with us. What a blessing to play in His beautiful creation.

Our awesome youth Marc Bond aka Alexander, Stephen McPherson aka Kid, Ryan McPherson aka Rastaswabby, Ryan Hall aka pretty boy, Sean McCormick, Faith Mills, Kristen and Danielle Petruzzelli, Jessica Skowronski, Serena Desai, Caitlin McPherson, and Karen Click were helpful and kind to each other and a great joy to be around the whole trip. Cliff Click, Gloria Ashdown-Skowronski, Russ Petruzzelli, and Bonnie McPherson were wonderful and showed great courage and enthusiasm. Thank you everyone for coming.

Katie McCormick

